

Meeting Notes

Youth Listening Session

February 9, 2011

5-5:30 p.m.

Office of the State Superintendent of Education

Overview:

This meeting was convened to gain the input of youth in the DCPS community on how to make our schools safe, inclusive and welcoming learning environments for all. The input gathered will contribute to the development of a comprehensive plan for supporting the DCPS LGBTQ community of students, staff and families. A newly formed LGBTQ Steering Committee of students, school administration and staff, parents and community experts is guiding the Central Office staff in the development and implementation of this plan.

Attendance: 7 DCPS students

Notes:

Issue	Comments
Purpose, goals and expectations	The DCPS Central Office is developing a comprehensive plan for supporting the DCPS LGBTQ community of students, staff and families. This listening session was convened to gain the input of youth to guide the implementation of this plan.
Gallery Walk	<p>For each subtopic, students worked in pairs to develop their recommendations. They then reported their recommendations back to the group:</p> <p><i>Improving Skills and Knowledge of School-Based Staff:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Much of the feedback from the students centered around ensuring that staff are non-judgmental, and that it should be widely known in the school communities that staff are non-judgmental and can be trusted.• Principals need to know about their students and how they act, and they need to at least try to understand what youth are going through. Schools should really look at what the needs are for their students and then act according to those needs.

	<p><i>Promoting Positive School Culture:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSAs need to be treated equally to other groups. • They suggested using designated weeks and days for our work (No Name Calling Day, etc.) or making up our own. • Agreement among the students that we need to really break down biases and myths and be kind to one another. <p><i>Creating an Inclusive Work Environment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity should be widely celebrated, there should be no bullying of staff or students, and everyone should be enforcing this. <p><i>Welcoming All Families:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to get students and families to participate in programs, there should be lots of advertisement, food, entertainment, etc. Outreach should happen well in advance. <p><i>Linking Schools and Communities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about resources should be widely available, and the schools should use them.
Next Steps	<p>This listening session data will be presented at the next meeting of the LGBTQ steering committee on February 23, 2011 for incorporation into the overall plan.</p> <p>For more information contact Andrea DeSantis, Risk Reduction Coordinator, at andrea.desantis@dc.gov or 202.442.5040.</p>